

EVALUATE THE PAST TO BUILD THE FUTURE

FINAL REPORT

**of
the Second Phase
of the**

Evaluation of the Impact of the Centro DEMOS Program

USAID/El Salvador
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

DUAL PURPOSE OF THIS EVALUATION

The Scope of Work (SOW) contained in the Delivery Order received by *Management Systems International* (MSI) from USAID/El Salvador specified a dual purpose, generic and specific, to be achieved through a two-phased process. (See SOW in *Annex A*.) *Phase I* (from August 15 to September 2, 1995) had three specific objectives:

- (A) Develop an effective methodology for evaluating the impact of conflict management programs based on the experience of the Centro DEMOS program in El Salvador;
- (B) Assess the use of participatory processes in evaluation design;
- (C) Develop a scope of work for the evaluation of the Centro DEMOS conflict management program.

After obtaining approval from the Office of Democratic Initiatives (ODI) of USAID/El Salvador of the SOW developed during *Phase I*, and with the obligation of additional funds, *Phase II* (from September 4 to October 16, later extended to December 10) was carried out. The objective of this Phase was:

- (D) Carry out the evaluation of the Centro DEMOS program funded by USAID through a Cooperative Agreement with the *Institute for Central American Studies*.

The *Report of the First Phase*, with the SOW for *Phase II*, was presented to USAID on August 31. Immediately, ODI accepted the Report and approved the SOW verbally, which motivated the continuation of the work. Nevertheless, the formal approval letter was not emitted until September 21. (See copy of the Report and the letter in *Annex B*).

The specific objectives included in the SOW for *Phase II* were:

1. Demonstrate the impact of this program on the level of tolerance of direct beneficiaries, associated institutions, and the reconciliation process in El Salvador.
2. Provide information on the capacity to permeate the political culture of direct beneficiaries through the study of selected topics.
3. Describe and assess the conflict management activities that are not programmed but are contemplated in the Center.

4. Provide information on program activities and continual internal monitoring systems, indicating to what extent the objectives and cost-benefit effectiveness of the program have been achieved.
5. Provide information on the capacity of the Center to continue attracting leaders, to maintain its academic quality, and to follow up on former students.
6. Determine the capacity of FUNDEMOS to stay in operation, fulfilling all legal requirements, and obtaining the financial resources necessary to sustain its own activities and those of Centro DEMOS.
7. Describe next steps and the future need for conflict management activities, providing grounded recommendations on the continuation of the DEMOS project, the changes believed to be appropriate in its future activities, the potential for replication, and lessons learned.
8. Assess the participatory and effective character of the methodology designed by MSI for evaluating the impact of conflict management programs, based on the results obtained through the application of said methodology to the evaluation of the Centro DEMOS program in El Salvador.
9. Examine the advantage, or lack thereof, of using this type of participatory process in the evaluation of conflict management programs.

METHODOLOGY

Phase I:

- # Preparatory work in Washington (August 15/18) - Team Planning Meeting; interviews with ICAS and other key persons in the field of conflict resolution; review of documents; design of the methodology to be applied; drafting of initial documents.
- # Formation and work of Design Team in El Salvador, with the participation of all interested parties (August 21/31) and terminating with the presentation of the objectives, indicators, means of verification, methods and executors for *Phase II*.

Phase II:

- # Conversion of Design Team into Evaluation Team to monitor the process, approve the selection and contracting of a local consultant and of the questionnaire to be sent to former students, identify the leaders to be interviewed (key informants), and lend technical assistance with logistical questions and the scheduling of interviews.

In accordance with the plan laid out by the Design Team in *Phase I*, three main elements made up the methodology for this second Phase:

- È Analysis by MSI of relevant documents from ICAS, Centro DEMOS, FUNDEMOS (the Foundation formed as permanent home for this activity), and the EX-CEDES Association (made up of DEMOS graduates), plus national newspapers and other publications related to national reality. (See the list of documents consulted in *Annex C*.)
- È The drafting, administration, processing, and analysis by a local consultant of a questionnaire sent to all 120 graduates of Centro DEMOS courses. (See copy of the questionnaire and the analysis of the data in *Annex D*.)
- È Individual interviews with: 34 leaders from various key sectors; the 13 members of the DEMOS staff; half dozen panelists and speakers from DEMOS courses; two other donors; two leaders of the EX-CEDES Association; various institutions represented in the courses; and, various USAID officials. These interviews were conducted by MSI and, in the case of key informants, whenever possible, accompanied by DEMOS staff members. In addition, MSI carried out group interviews with the FUNDEMOS Executive Council, and with some 55 former students. (See the list of persons interviewed in *Annex E*.)

ORGANIZATION OF THIS REPORT

Unlike its organic or physical condition at the beginning of October 1993, evaluating the impact of Centro DEMOS now requires the analysis of an entire system or organism. In addition to the Center itself, which functions as the secretariat or heart of the organism, one must take into account FUNDEMOS as the governing body or brain, and the Association of EX-CEDES, whose members represent the nervous system. In addition, one must consider the needs of the principal donor, USAID, which requires information for future funding decisions and who contracted for this work.

Therefore, this evaluation could not be restricted to a narrow investigation of Centro DEMOS, without taking into account the other elements of the system of which it is now a part (and which its very existence generated), and the donor's requirements. To order our findings, conclusions and recommendations in a logical sequence, and in keeping with the objectives identified, we have divided them into three sections, moving from the most detailed to the most global:

- A. Those related to specific aspects of the work of Centro DEMOS;
- B. Those having to do with FUNDEMOS; and
- C. Those of special interest to USAID.

TEAM COMPOSITION

The two persons who made up the **MSI team** were Joan M. Goodin, Evaluation Research Specialist and Chief of Party, and Emily Forman, Administrative Assistant.

The other members of the Design Team that was created in El Salvador, and which later became the Evaluation Team, included:

- For **USAID/ODI**: Kristin Loken, Director, Carrie Thompson, Deputy Director, and Salvador Novellino, Program Officer;
- For **ICAS**: George Biddle, President, and Teresa Campos, Program Officer;
- For **FUNDEMOS**: Rutilio Escalante, Coordinator Pro Tem;
- For **Centro DEMOS**: Raúl Huezo, Executive Director, Marta Alicia de Canales, Academic Advisor for the Social Sector, and Ricardo Córdova, consultant;
- For the **EX-CEDES Association**: Rinaldo Golcher, Vice President, and Alicia Flores, member.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The MSI team takes this opportunity to transmit sincere appreciation to USAID/ODI/El Salvador, to ICAS, to the Centro DEMOS staff, and to all the leaders who offered their time, experience and knowledge during the interviews carried out.

We particularly recognize all those who participated on the Design/Evaluation Team. Without their knowledge, trust and good will we would not have been able to move forward with the mandate with which we arrived.

With everyone's support, we were able to put together a complete picture, which permitted us to prove the great value of the work already done by Centro DEMOS and to visualize the unique and historic role that FUNDEMOS and EX-CEDES will be called upon to play in the future.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND

NATIONAL POLITICAL CONTEXT IN WHICH CENTRO DEMOS WAS BORN

(This section was drafted and contributed by Centro DEMOS)

The country's political past, as recognized by president Alfredo Cristiani in his address during the signing of the Peace Accords at Chapultepec, has been characterized in this way: "...one of the pernicious gaps in our national system was the absence or insufficiency of spaces and mechanisms to permit the free play of ideas and the natural development of different political projects derived from freedom of thought and action; in synthesis, the absence of a true democratic scheme for living..."

The reference by president Alfredo Cristiani to what has been called authoritarianism has marked the country's history. The contradiction between rights and reality generated a perverted form for exercising power which did not allow the right to political participation - in a country in which the vote is obligatory - to create alternatives, and prevented the option to organize from leading to the generation of alternative power, capable of guaranteeing fair participation in the benefits of development; that is, the State violated its own norms.

Impunity, then, far from being an aberration, fruit of individual wills, became an intrinsic element within the system, also converting legislative and judicial organs into corrupt instruments. Nevertheless, a growing decision by an ever-larger part of the citizenry for seeking spaces in which to participate led the government of Gen. Romero into crisis in 1979, when discontent became uncontrollable.

The coup of October 1979, according to the declarations of army officials, was carried out to end the abuses of power, incarnated in part by the army itself, and to seek the support of civilians who could lead the country in the process of the economic and socio-political reforms that needed to be carried out in order to avoid the violent alternative proposed by the insurgent forces of the left.

The coup and the efforts for change were not sufficient to avoid armed conflict in the 80's, which came about at the stage at which regional conflicts became more severe. This was also a consequence of underdevelopment and internal socio-political exclusion. The absence of a pluralistic environment and of political tolerance in El Salvador, as well as the insertion of violence as a political means to resolve national problems, have been pointed to as the fundamental causes of the war which lasted more than a decade, during which even more civil rights and the political freedom of Salvadoran society were sacrificed. This conflict, which took 75,000 lives, undermined the incipient development of the 60's.

After the armed conflict, negotiation opened spaces for a transition toward greater national democracy which, in the context of the collapse of the socialist bloc and of the rearrangement of world capitalism, contributed to resolving to some degree the ideological part of the Salvadoran problem, leaving to the development of the Chapultepec Accords that which related to political and socio-economic reforms.

Nevertheless, given the deep roots of the Salvadoran conflict, it became evident that more than excellent negotiation capability was needed; willingness, new perceptions and greater levels of tolerance on the part of the various actors were necessary in order to provide spaces in society that facilitated the transition to modernization of all kinds.

The Peace Accords, achieved after great national and international effort, thus became a basic model for pacific political and social co-existence for Salvadorans; they express the minimum spirit of pacific co-existence about which the majority has demonstrated consensus. This does not necessarily mean that the differences of the past no longer exist or that the various forces have abandoned their principles and projects; rather, the different Salvadoran political sectors have moved to a cycle of re-accommodation in the search for new forms of internal articulation within society.

Centro DEMOS appears at a moment when the implementation of the Peace Accords and the process leading to the elections of March '94 measure the pulse of the national political scenario. Both events constitute at that moment an important recognition of the legitimacy of the pacification process.

The new government of Dr. Armando Calderón Sol is the first to be elected outside of the context of war and it demonstrated that the electoral game fits in the still fragile process, but that it has a minimum guarantee of consensus and the ability to function. Also, the inclusion of the FMLN within the state apparatus stemming from the election results, despite its internal disputes, constitutes a hitherto unknown event or, at least, unpredictable consequence with regard to reconciliation and the modernization of the Salvadoran political class and that of those sectors which feel represented in it. Dealing with concepts such as "political competence," "power sharing," or "co-government of the nation," there are now examples and very concrete meaning.

It must be pointed out that this political process did not take place without stumbles, delays and certain deformations. Problems in the lack of political will and in the technical aspects of the execution of the Accords led to a hardening and backing down of the negotiators' positions at certain moments. Mediation by ONUSAL and efforts at international cooperation contributed to overcoming antagonistic situations. Even during the post-war period, it has been necessary to count on effective mediation work.

Thus, Centro DEMOS appeared in a dual scenario: on one hand, it became evident that there was a need to create instances of reconciliation and mediation to sustain the impetus injected into Salvadoran society by the Peace negotiations. But, on the other hand, these instances were exposed, as was the very process of implementing the Accords, to the criticism and distrust of the various sectors, expressed in accusations of ideological and political partiality. DEMOS then from the beginning had to move within this dual scenario, which required strategic vision. Reconciliation arose, then, as a real alternative which might result in the implementation of adequate and effective mechanisms that offered space for the leaders of the different projects to meet and dialogue in search of recognizing their differences and diminishing conflicts.

Conscious of this context, Centro DEMOS has sought to become a response to that need for space for respectful debate and constructive critical dialogue. The project stems from the premise that, in the nascent process of peace and democracy, the solution to the problems now faced by the country depends in large

measure on the level of understanding and participation achieved among the distinct sectors involved, and on understanding by political actors that the different socio-political and economic problems are intimately related.

Thus, efforts to establish democratic co-existence and a lasting peace begin to depend on the level of convergence and reasoned political-ideological tolerance generated in society. This initiative aspires to establish, strengthen and maintain channels of communication among the diverse groups that still hold opposing positions, in order to broaden the space necessary to allow indiscriminate participation and critical-constructive dialogue to eradicate the culture of violence and authoritarianism from society and give way to a new response that permits the configuration within the new national scenario of the possibility of new hopes for more human development.

THE FIRST STEPS

(Centro DEMOS contributed to this section)

The idea of creating and organizing Centro DEMOS in El Salvador arose as a confluence of identification among some members of the U.S. Congress and North American and Central American consultants on regional politics. Their fundamental objective was to contribute to the democratization of Central American countries, especially those that had been most damaged by conflicts.

With the support of the *Institute for Central American Studies (ICAS)*, a U.S. NGO, consultants Leonel Gómez (Salvadoran) and José María Argueta (Guatemalan), took political and administrative steps to constitute Centro DEMOS in El Salvador. Then, through ICAS, USAID/El Salvador made available the necessary funds to get the project underway.

Other institutions that accompanied the first efforts were: The Charter 77 Foundation, now "Foundation for a Civil Society" of New York and the "North South Center" of Miami, which collaborated with the Salvadoran Supreme Court of Justice and USAID/El Salvador in support of a Conference titled: *Reconciliation in Times of Transition*, held on January 11 and 12, 1993 in San Salvador, which publicly launched Centro DEMOS. On that occasion, leaders from different parts of the world met to share their experiences with the protagonists of the Peace Accords in El Salvador.

The specific way in which it was planned to use the USAID contribution was through the replication of a strategic studies center similar to Centro ESTNA in Guatemala (which USAID/Guatemala supported), whose main objective is to provide a space for the diverse social sectors to obtain a reciprocal understanding of their differences and their similarities, as well as of the national reality of which they are all a part.

Though the general idea of ESTNA served as an example, DEMOS was constituted as a flexible experiment open to new ideas in its execution. The idea was to create an inclusive space, politically neutral, pluralist, promoter of the capacity of the sectors concerned to contribute to and participate in the resolution of national problems.

From the outset to mid 1992, support was received from the Supreme Court of Justice, which in fact became the institution that provided the counterpart funds. Nevertheless, that support became embroiled by events and political interpretations which made separation necessary in order to work with financial autonomy like any other institution. The separation made it necessary to re-construct the infrastructure needed to initiate the first training course.

ROLE OF ICAS AND USAID

Evolution of the Program Under the Cooperative Agreement: In support of its Strategic Objective No. 3 (Lasting Democratic Institutions with Broad Participation), on September 30, 1993, USAID/El Salvador approved a Cooperative Agreement (CA) with ICAS for Centro DEMOS courses. The CA, which had a duration of one year, provided US\$1,000,000 to cover direct expenses (without any indirect costs) to "support national reconciliation [of El Salvador] through the establishment of a democratic leadership training program."

The two "interrelated activities" contemplated in the CA were the Centro DEMOS leadership training program and organizational technical assistance by ICAS to "construct a Salvadoran consensus for the creation of a Salvadoran foundation" that would be "broadly representative of the myriad social and economic factors in Salvadoran society, to serve as the permanent home of Centro DEMOS and sponsor of the training program." The CA also stated that "should a consensus emerge," ICAS would provide "technical assistance to facilitate the incorporation of the Salvadoran foundation and to develop a diversified financial base."

In addition, the CA stated that direct beneficiaries would be some 60 Salvadoran leaders who would participate in the training program. Likewise, it pointed out that "indirectly, all Salvadoran society will benefit from the greater political stability afforded through greater reliance on democratic methods for conflict resolution."

The activities funded by the CA began with the organization of an office and the contracting by ICAS of Leonel Gómez and José María Argueta as Co-Executive Directors of Centro DEMOS. These two, in turn, recruited and contracted the administrative and academic personnel in accordance with the project's principles of pluralism and tolerance and, in the case of the academic staff, in accordance with their professional capabilities in the five areas or factors of power on which, per the ESTNA model, the courses were to be based: economic, geographic, military, political and social.

Management sought contacts with notable personalities within the country and overseas so that the team might be trained and to obtain different opinions on the idea of the project. Through a process of experiential learning which reflected the same philosophy of tolerance and respect for the opinion of others that the course was to employ, the academic team received intensive training over the period of some three months. The administrative staff, occupied with the initial tasks related to their work, did not participate in that training and, therefore, did not share that experience, which became important in the life of the academic group and of the Center.

Finally, the Center's first course took place from January to June 1994, with the participation of 60 students representing more than 45 different institutions.

On September 30, 1994, the CA was amended to: 1) add US\$750,000 in DA funds, making a total obligation of US\$1,750,000; and, 2) extend the termination date to September 30, 1995. It was also specified that ICAS would contribute US\$86,000 (751,600 Colones) in non-federal funds (later reduced to US\$45,000), in cash or in kind, to cover part of the costs of "operation and administration of the Training Program," especially student stipends. Also, ICAS was authorized to charge a provisional overhead rate of 48.83%, and a provisional G&A rate of 4.59%. Recently, a no-cost extension to December 31, 1995 was approved.

The positive results of the first DEMOS course, combined with ICAS' successful efforts, led to the public inauguration of the *Fundación para el Desarrollo del Estado de Derecho y la Democracia Salvadoreña (FUNDEMOS)* in November 1994. In February 1995 the FUNDEMOS Executive Council adopted the by-laws that guide the Foundation, and on May 3, legal recognition, which was still pending at the time of this evaluation, was requested.

In February 1995, Argueta left his post and the country to accept an appointment within the Guatemalan government. Therefore, in accordance with ICAS' commitment to recruit a national director, that same month Raúl Huezo was contracted as Executive Director, with Gómez remaining as Co-Director. Nevertheless, in July 1995, Gómez stopped receiving financial remuneration from ICAS, contributing his services to the project as part of the US\$45,000 in counterpart funds that ICAS was to contribute. This arrangement was made to cover the three months from July to October because it was thought that the ICAS-USAID Agreement would terminate at the end of September. Gómez is also a member of the FUNDEMOS Council, having requested leave to the end of September. After that date, he could resume his post on the Council or decide to stay on as an advisor to the Center.

At the time of this evaluation, it was still not known what would happen between October and the end of December, the new termination date of the Agreement with USAID. It is important to be aware of this history in order to understand some of the characteristics observed at Centro DEMOS.

Monitoring of Progress: As reflected in the three SARs (Semi Annual Reports) that USAID had presented to date (October 1993 to March 1995), the Agency has used two EOPS (End Of Project Status) to measure program progress:

- Ë National reconciliation/consent on the part of Salvadoran leaders and their representative groups to listen to and understand opposing points of view, participate in dialogues and construct tolerance and confidence; and
- Ë Plans made for the more permanent establishment of a Salvadoran forum for dialogue (from now on known as the Foundation for the Development of Salvadoran Rule of Law and Democracy or FUNDEMOS).

On monitoring progress toward these EOPS, USAID has not reported analytic information - nor apparently has it requested such data from ICAS, in spite of the requirements of the CA. While there are quantitative data (number of courses, students, sessions, speakers; establishment of FUNDEMOS and number of persons involved, etc.) in the SARs, there are no qualitative data.

Neither has ICAS, for its part, required that DEMOS establish as stated in the CA "a baseline, through a survey or similar instrument of participants' values and attitudes with regard to tolerance of others' beliefs, and then revising these results through a follow-on study."

As a result of these facts, no systematized baseline exists for measuring the progress of DEMOS.

Relations among the Parties: Apparently, relations between ICAS and DEMOS/FUNDEMOS are quite positive. Leonel Gómez, who currently represents the Institute *en situ*, has been Co-Director of the Center from the beginning, and was one of the principle founders of FUNDEMOS. Meanwhile, the ICAS President and Program Officer travel to the Center from their office in Washington, DC several times a year to lend technical assistance to the Center and to FUNDEMOS. Between trips, they are in continual contact by phone, fax or mail.

Relations between ICAS/DEMOS and USAID/El Salvador have not always been so good. The fact that ICAS decided at certain critical moments to utilize its contacts with legislators and others in high positions in the U.S. has caused tensions with the Mission. In addition, there have been difficulties between some U.S. representatives in El Salvador and those of ICAS. Another factor was the difficulty experienced by ICAS on trying to comply with USAID regulations while familiarizing the members of the FUNDEMOS Executive Council with said regulations -something new and quite complicated for a new board, established after the program it is supposed to be responsible for is already in operation.

Another negative point in the relationship between USAID and ICAS/DEMOS was a survey of former students contracted out by the Mission to a commercial house in San Salvador in a sudden manner and without prior consultation. That happened in September 1994, and the process, plus the way in which some of the questions in the survey were formulated, caused problems with ICAS and DEMOS, and with the former students themselves. Though the report was shared by USAID/ODI with ICAS and the Center, and in spite of the fact that it contained useful information, the results were never used by DEMOS.

In general, it would seem that with the passage of time and some personnel changes, relations have normalized. The fact that USAID/ODI decided that this final program evaluation would be done in a participatory manner also appears to have helped refresh the atmosphere. It is obvious that Office is sincerely dedicated to the principle of participation, and that there is also interest in using this experience to design and test new evaluation methodologies in the field of conflict resolution.

Use of Funds: The current Illustrative Financial Plan by USAID/El Salvador reflects the investment of US\$1,795,000, including US\$45,000 in counterpart funds from ICAS, in the following manner:

#	Personnel costs	US\$	389,475	21%
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#	Overhead rate (48.33%)	54,764	3%
#	Operation and administration of the training program	1,204,880	67%
#	ICAS administration/management	64,521	4%
#	Audits	8,846	4%
#	G&A (5.38%)	34,514	2%
#	Evaluation	38,000	2%
	TOTAL	1,795,000	100%

CHAPTER III

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Of the nine objectives of *Phase II*, five relate directly to the work of Centro DEMOS and one addresses FUNDEMOS. The last three fall within the specific interests of USAID with regard to future steps and the use of participatory methodologies for evaluating the impact of conflict management programs.

Therefore, this chapter is divided into three sets of findings, conclusions and recommendations directed to: Centro DEMOS, FUNDEMOS, and USAID.

A. CENTRO DEMOS

In accordance with the plan laid out by the Design Team, interviews were conducted with all members of the DEMOS staff and with nearly half of the 120 former students, of whom 80% are men. Also, a written survey was carried out through a questionnaire sent to all 120 graduates, of whom 28 (23.3%) responded. Of that group, 19 (67.9%) were men, and nine (32.1%) were women. Results of the survey are found in *Annex D - Informe sobre Evaluación del Impacto del Programa del Centro DEMOS*.

Unfortunately, there were problems with the delivery of the questionnaires, even though a commercial service was contracted for that purpose. Therefore, it is not known how many former students would have responded if they had received the document in a timely manner. Nevertheless, there is concurrence between the results obtained through the personal interviews and by way of the questionnaire.

FINDINGS:

1. Levels of Tolerance: The interviews and survey provided considerable evidence that the impact of the DEMOS courses on the level of tolerance of direct beneficiaries has been high. As seen in *Annex D*, where the impact was shown to be most relevant was in the following aspects: support of ideological pluralism, acceptance of speaking and working with persons with similar or contrary ideas, and respect for persons independent of what they think. On the other hand, tolerance toward acts which do not fit within the way the group thinks (e.g., taking over buildings or streets, and peaceful demonstrations to make oneself heard in society) fell below the norm.

Because there are no previous quantitative indices, the results of the survey do not permit us to measure the degree of change. However, it can be affirmed that, according to the former students who responded, the change of tolerance permits them to exercise leadership functions and democratic practices in accordance with the goals of the Center's program.

During the course of the interviews, two suggestions were offered for measuring the impact of the program on the students' level of tolerance in the future. One is to have students do a self-evaluation of changes due

to the course, reporting results to the Center and, for those who are so disposed, handing in written results as a contribution to the official monitoring process. In this case, at the beginning of the course each participant receives a list of specific topics of current interest and is asked to choose the one of greatest interest. Immediately, they are given time (say, 15-20 minutes) to write their thoughts or opinions on the topic selected, and are then asked to put what they have written away and not to refer to that paper until they are asked to do so. Later, during the last week of the course, students are asked to again write something on the topic that they had chosen, giving them another 15-20 minutes to carry out the task. Finally, the facilitator asks they compare the two documents, judging the degree to which a change in attitude/tolerance is revealed. The other method suggested involves a similar process, but seeks to measure students' reaction to some current and provocative happening. For this, students are shown one or more newspaper clippings, either for discussion or to write something at the beginning and end of the course. This latter method lends itself to measurement through observations by the staff who are present in the case of a group discussion.

With regard to the impact of the program on the level of tolerance of the institutions represented, results are less clear. During the interviews, former students reported that their ability to incorporate positive changes at their places of work depends largely on the type of institution with which they are associated. That is, in organizations which are very hierarchical, bureaucratic or rigid, it is not possible for them to have any great impact, except through their own behavior and their personal relations with colleagues. On the other hand, there were those who did explain the measures they had taken to incorporate changes within their organizations.

Some 85% of those who filled out the questionnaire reported having effected changes in their institutions as a result of the course. Said changes include, for example: promoting shared leadership, seeking mechanisms for labor unity, analyzing the institution with the methodology learned, lowering the level of attack and confrontation, being more objective, carrying out work in a pluralist team, promoting less ideological and politicized work at Human Rights, introducing curriculum changes with materials on national realities, approaching business organizations, improving the system for training leaders and management teams, etc. Moreover, the majority (78%) have made their institutions aware of what they learned in the program.

Once more, in the absence of clear indicators, previous data, and a follow-up plan on the part of the Center to continually update information, one can only say that the level of impact of the program within the institutions represented is quite uneven.

The last facet of the evaluation of the impact of the course on the level of tolerance sought to investigate the degree to which the national reconciliation process had been affected. One hundred percent of those who filled out the questionnaire affirm that the impact on that process is clear and profound. The reasons given include: because it brings together the institutions and social forces existing in the country (25%); because it strengthens the climate of tolerance, which is fundamental for reconciliation (18%); because it facilitates dialogue among the different sectors; because on promoting the truth one promotes reconciliation; because it generates the leaders' awareness of the need for a concerted effort; because we are social forces, etc. Eight of the nine women who responded to the questionnaire believe that the activities as well

as the products transcend the individuals and institutions involved: because we are multipliers, or because there is EX-CEDES. On the other hand, 50% of the men believe that: the activities have not been sufficiently disseminated, that it doesn't go beyond the students, that it transcends very little. Or, as one said, "Yes it has some influence, but more publicity, more dissemination is needed."

Though the persons and institutions that have participated in the courses are considered to be influential in society, from the interviews and survey, it is very difficult to pinpoint the degree of impact the program has had on the country's reconciliation process. Judging by the low level of dissemination, it does not appear to go much beyond the circle of students and their own institutions.

2. Ability to permeate the political culture through the study of selected topics: During both internal and external interviews, as well as through the questionnaire, we inquired about the definition of "political culture," that is used so frequently at the Center and in the courses. The responses demonstrated that, though there is a general understanding of the meaning of the word, there is no common definition, even among the former students. It is interesting to note that the women who answered the questionnaire perceive it rather as something related to values and human behavior and to society. Their definitions included, for example: behaviors, attitudes and understanding of how to confront politics; the assimilation of the values and ideas of a political system; a country's political identity including its traditions, customs, myths and the way it explains them; attitudes and ways of thinking that affect society. Meanwhile, men identified it more with power, politics, and the state: as a systematized set of experiences and ideas linked to the power that one has, individually as well as collectively; the political position within which one lives; knowledge of the different doctrines of the affairs of state; participation by civil society in the country's problems; accumulation of knowledge of political events carried into action, etc.

With respect to the ability to permeate the political culture of direct beneficiaries through the study of selected topics, the former students who responded to the survey report that the topics that helped them to analyze their own political culture were the following: 80% of the women say all topics, since they provided good information that was converted into knowledge and that led them to better understand reality. Some point out that the political topic helped them most because they identified with it. The men were more specific: 22% chose the political topic and an equal percentage was drawn to the economic topic. The military topic was attractive to some 17%.

Among those who answered the questionnaire, there are differences of opinion on whether or not the Center's work is the best way to impact the country's political culture. Forty-seven percent think that it is, while others affirm that it is not the best way. The latter suggest that, in addition to the courses, there should be massive dissemination through the mass media; parallel activities should be carried out with other institutes; more field work should be done; there should be a larger social presence; it gives the impression that it doesn't want to be recognized; it should be a forum for social analysis, etc.

The process of selecting topics was also analyzed during the interviews and in the questionnaire. This process involved the participation of the institutions invited to be represented in the course in the identification and discussion of specific topics within each of the five "factors of power" on which the course is based and that are fixed areas (military, economic, political, social and geographic). Then, the Center's

academic staff (specialists in the five factors) incorporate the topics selected into a curriculum, and seek speakers and panelists from different ideological tendencies to give their points of view during the course.

The written survey demonstrates that only 36% of men and women think that the process that has been used to now is good. A series of suggestions is offered regarding how the process should be adjusted. Interviews with persons from outside the system also resulted in various suggestions for improving topic selection. The suggestions offered had to do mainly with the type of questionnaire used (that it should be less closed), or the time permitted for the identification or discussion of priorities.

Regarding the five factors of power on which the topics treated in the course are based, 22% of the women and 33% of the men who responded to the questionnaire are in agreement with the five, affirming that they are sufficiently broad. Here, too, a series of suggestions is offered with regard to new factors that the course should include. On the other hand, interviews with the DEMOS staff indicated considerable agreement with the five factors, as well as with the process of selecting topics.

It is fitting to mention that during an interview with leaders of the *Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy*, an NGO in Washington which is dedicated exclusively to conflict resolution, they commented that for them the use of the five factors does not seem as "elictive" as they would like (taken from or based on participants' concerns) - that it sounds like "more of the political thing." They are now aiming at what they call "transformative social change." They told of the great success achieved recently with a Consultation on Reconciliation, where they separated the topics into three categories: psychological, spiritual, and structural. They also mentioned that the training they sponsor emphasizes the difference between "positions" and "needs."

3. Unprogrammedbut Contemplated Activities: This objective refers to the activities carried out by the Center in the field of conflict management, above and beyond the courses programmed. That is, according to a document contributed by the Center (*Actions by Centro DEMOS in the Field of Conflict Management - Annex F*): "DEMOS was designed as a strategic studies center. But strategy was not understood to be a mechanical and complicated instrument, but rather as a method or a set of ideas on democracy, political culture and the strategic praxis which derive from diverse theoretical streams of political thought."

On considering this area, the Design/Evaluation Team identified the level of staff training as one of the points to be examined. On doing so, it was seen that the intensive training received by the academic group on initiating the Center's activities was apparently based on the basic principles of adult education - or, learning by doing. That is, according to staff it was a process of experiential learning, in which participants were exposed to the same conditions and lessons that they were to reproduce later for the students. This method seems to have been especially appropriate for the DEMOS group, since they themselves represented a melting pot of different tendencies and ideologies, bringing with them different experiences and a varied level of involvement in the national problematic - as with the students with whom they were to work. In essence, learning to tolerate their own differences, which was one of the goals of the course, caused the result within the group itself which they would later seek with the students. This method also permitted the academic staff's daily work to constitute a continuation of their training.

Interviews with members of the academic group revealed the success of the training with regard to their comprehension of the Center's philosophy. This was also reflected in a document written by a member of the group, which contains phrases like: "... all was learning, renovation of thought, internal struggle to break the code and a bit of desperation... it became a real problem, experienced by the same human group that began to transform itself into the DEMOS project... we had to learn from all, among all and from each one of us, especially from oneself." From conversations with former students it is also obvious that the method learned has served well in the two courses already carried out. (Unfortunately, the Director in charge of this area had decided not to participate in this evaluation; on requesting more concrete information on the methodology used for staff training, he preferred not to respond.)

There is evidence that, while the national context and student attitudes continue to evolve, complementary knowledge will be increasingly needed. For example, various members of the staff mentioned the need to acquire greater skills in the field of group dynamics and facilitation. Likewise, there is a need for greater knowledge of the various types and techniques currently in use for conflict resolution in different parts of the world, as well as updated methods in the field of strategic studies.

Though the Center has a Training Fund, of which many staff members have been able to take advantage (but which unfortunately is now broke), they have done so in an individually. That is, the Center has not formulated a formal plan for continuing staff training.

With regard to the method used by DEMOS for conflict management, its characteristics are explained in above-mentioned document. In a deliberate manner, they have formed part of the various experiences in managing conflict situations in which the Center's staff have been involved either directly or indirectly.

This refers to actions that, because of time and the lack of systematization, have not yet been documented. For that reason, it is difficult to describe the process followed and assess the concrete objectives sought (differentiating those related to the conflict itself from those linked directly to the interests of the Center) and the results achieved. Among these actions are mentioned, for example, those related to the El Espino Farm in El Salvador, the problem of Chiapas, Mexico and its regional impact, and the Cuban situation. (Though specific information was to have been included in this Report, there was not sufficient time for the Center to process and document the cases mentioned.) However, it was explained that intervention by DEMOS in the solution of these conflicts was a direct result of its relationship with the students, and of the opening achieved as a result of the course.

As will be seen in above-mentioned document, the method utilized for managing conflicts is based on a number of components, including: identification of sectarian patterns; management of information; management of friction; location of situations and critical topics; opening and constant adjustment; and, the Penelope tactic. It is also explained that experience has shown that the management of this technique requires a clear awareness of the objective and, with great emphasis, of the timeframe for achieving it.

Besides not having been able to yet document the actions already taken, the Center has still not converted accumulated experience into a formal policy on when, how and where it will accept invitations to intervene, investing its good offices and resources to obtain greater impact consistent with its own objectives. That

is, still lacking is the institutional ability to recognize in an accurate and transparent manner the type or location of the conflicts in which it is in the Center's interest to invest its efforts.

From the various interviews, especially with Center staff, a policy built on more or less the following basis is foreseen: that the conflicts attended to would be only those brought to the Center by: a) the students through information at their disposal or contacts they have; or, b) institutions that the Center has identified as strategically key in the reconciliation process. In this way, the underpinnings of the Center's work in this area would always be the courses, which are DEMOS' principal reason for being.

4. Activities, Internal Monitoring Systems and Cost-Benefit of the Program: From the beginning, the Center's principal programmatic activity has been the holding of an annual democratic leadership training course, aimed at some 60 leaders from the various sectors of Salvadoran society. According to a document written by the President of ICAS, titled *Centro DEMOS: One Mechanism to Strengthen Salvadoran Democracy, Civil Society and Peace*, the premise was that "El Salvador will not develop peacefully and democratically until the competing interests in society know and understand each other and begin to rely on open discussion of differences, negotiation strategies and compromise rather than hostile or destructive confrontations." It is then explained that: "The Center's goal is to establish, maintain and consolidate horizontal lines of communication among society's different interest groups in order to minimize the potential for violent confrontation and polarization and explore the possibilities for cooperation, development and consensual problem-solving." Therefore, the courses have sought to bring together leaders, mainly from the mid level for greater continuity, to learn to listen to one another and appreciate their various points of view on the topics selected, thus increasing the level of tolerance toward persons and ideas in opposition. As part of the methodology, there is never an attempt to have participants come to consensus on the issues they discuss.

To date, two courses have been held - January/June 1994 and November 1994/June 1995. In accordance with what was specified in the Agreement between ICAS and USAID, participants have included leaders from the most diverse sectors: military, FMLN, other political parties, unions, business, government, church, NGOs, education, and other groups in society. Participant selection is based on the identification of institutions and individuals who are considered key in the national reconciliation process.

Classes are held from 4:00pm to 9:00pm on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays at a site rented by the Center for the duration of the course. All participants receive a stipend or daily fee from the Center for attending, and a daily fee/honorarium is also paid to all speakers and panelists.

Based on the Centro ESTNA format, the course consists of topics selected within five "factors of power," and the curriculum is divided into three sequential stages. The first analyzes the international picture, the current situation in El Salvador and general concepts related to democracy, the modernization of the state, sustainable development, and so forth. The second stage is dedicated to the study, analysis and discussion of the specific topics selected within the five factors of power. The third stage is dedicated to the theory, methodology and application of strategic analysis and planning, global megatrends and the philosophy of international cooperation. This permits participants, after studying the different theories for the resolution of problems, to apply them to the topics that they have been examining during the course.

Sessions are taped, and the Center has videos that cover both courses. In general, sessions begin with plenaries in which a speaker or group of experts (panel discussions) presents different points of view on the same topic. After a period of discussion, dinner is served on site and participants can continue talking informally. Then, they are divided into four seminar-workshops to analyze and discuss the presentations and their own points of view. To end the session, students again meet in plenary to learn and debate the conclusions of the different work groups. During the third stage, there are also two study tours of three days each, designed to observe directly some of the points treated during the course.

At the end of the first course, one of the results was the formation by participants of their own organization, the EX-CEDES Association, in order to continue the interaction. The Association meets regularly, and some of its members have formed informal work groups. EX-CEDES has elected its own leaders, adopting by-laws and, at the time of this evaluation, was awaiting approval of its request for legal recognition.

Without doubt, the Center has done an almost miraculous job at a very critical moment in the life of the country, creating between the two courses held to date a group of 120 graduates, many of whom appear to be highly committed to the Center's philosophy and method. That is, for them too DEMOS represented a significant experience at a very difficult period of their lives and that of their country.

With relation to the monitoring and evaluation process, the USAID Cooperative Agreement required "constant internal evaluations made by ICAS focusing on the general program methodology and strategy," plus other factors related to success and with the adjustments that might be needed. Likewise, it was specified that, for this purpose, "Input from participants will be requested on the presentation, format and content of the seminars." However, the CA did not include specific indicators for measuring progress, nor did it make concrete the results expected.

Neither ICAS nor Centro DEMOS have carried out the constant internal evaluations of programmatic methodology and strategy recommended, and mechanisms were never established for measuring progress. Therefore, no baseline data exist as a point of comparison.

The only survey done to now was an *Opinion Questionnaire* administered at the end of the second course by the Executive Director in order to inquire about the services and physical installations, the agenda and the panelists, the institutions represented, the students, the stipends, the results of the course, and other opinions. Those data were also processed and analyzed by the local consultant as part of this evaluation. (See copy of the Report in *Annex G*.)

In *Phase I* of this evaluation, the Design Team became aware of the need for DEMOS to find a way to evaluate the impact of its program on the students, the institutions and the reconciliation process. For that purpose, it was suggested that all students fill out a questionnaire at the beginning and end of the course. Experience from the past two years could be used to design a systematic mechanism for monitoring and evaluation. In fact, the Center could take advantage of the questionnaire designed for this evaluation, adapting it in accordance with the circumstances, and utilizing the data here collected as a baseline for future comparisons. One of the questions that it would be well to add is: "What do you want to get out of this

course?" It would be important to learn students' expectations as quickly as possible, and use this information when carrying out the final participatory evaluation of the course.

In preparation for this evaluation, and in accordance with what was specified by USAID in the Delivery Order, in Washington we interviewed leaders of *Search for Common Ground* (an NGO specialized in conflict resolution) about its monitoring system. That organization has an important program in the Middle East, where it employs a process of continual monitoring during seminars, involving the application of participant surveys three or four times throughout the course in order to measure such questions as the sustainability of the efforts formulated by the participants, changes in students' attitudes, and the "image of the other." They also emphasize work done through the school system, seeking to improve the curriculum and educating young people on "How to Prevent Conflicts" in order to thus ensure a more hopeful future for all. Their focus always is on the "commonalities" of the people. They collect and publish data from local NGOs, from human rights records, and case studies by seminar participants. They say that their methodology is prescriptive and also elicitive, that is, based on the concerns that come from the participants. They also sponsor a television series on CNN and other channels titled *Common Ground*, which focuses only on the commonalities of the parties engaged in the most cruel conflicts around the world. They also offer these programs in the form of videos.

Analyzing the cost-benefit of the program is very difficult, given that the desired results are not quantifiable and because no baseline data exist for measuring progress toward the specific objectives of the course or the advances made toward meeting the program's goals.

After considering the options, the Design Team decided that the best way to meet this mandate would be to compare an assessment by students themselves with accumulated financial data, dividing both by the five main components of the course: a) conferences, which are presentations by leaders who are specialists in the topics selected; b) panel discussions, where three or four panelists present different positions on a single topic followed by questions and answers; c) seminar-workshops, where students divide into work groups to discuss the topic at hand among themselves with some staff coordination; d) study tours, of which there are two per course, each lasting three days, and include the entire group; and e) supper-sessions which involve speakers, about eight students, the Co-Executive Directors, and 2-3 other staff members, all of whom are invited to remain after the session to have supper and converse informally.

The written survey, which was reviewed and approved by the Evaluation Team, resulted in an order of priority by former students, women as well as men, with regard to the value for them of the five components of the course. With regard to costs, the Center's Administrative Department did a complete analysis of the expenses involved in each component of the second course - without including the US\$62,700 for site rental, coffee breaks and light refreshment for the 87 sessions held. The results showed the following order of costs compared with the prioritization of components by former students, with 1 as the most valuable and 5 as the least valuable component:

<u>Component</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Priority</u>	<u>Average</u>
47 Panel Discussions	\$ 65,372	2	3.9

Seminar-Workshops	32,307	3	3.7 *
28 Conferences	23,660	1	4.4
2 Study Tours	13,977	4	3.3
24 Supper-Sessions	3,135	5	1.7

* This is the only component with a significant divergence between the two sexes:
women = 4.0, and men = 3.4.

From this comparison it can be seen that, in the opinion of the students, the component of greatest benefit for the cost involved was conferences. Then, while panel discussions received a high average, the cost was almost three times more than that of conferences, and more than double that of seminar-workshops, which were in third place. Supper-sessions appear to represent a considerable investment for the low level of benefit reported.

In general terms, the cost-benefit relationship was evaluated by former students in the following manner: as "excellent," 33.3%; as "very good," 50.0%; as "good," 13.9%; and as "fair," 2.8%. In addition, it was suggested that the question of cost-benefit cannot be evaluated in the short term, that this type of process must be evaluated over the long term.

Moreover, on responding to this question, the following comments were registered: follow-up on beneficiary institutions must be done; see if on resolving conflicts violent acts have diminished; if dialogue and harmonization are applied more frequently; see if students can be panelists, etc.

The survey also provided opinions concerning how to reduce the cost of the course. Regarding the payment of stipends to the students, 66.7% think that these daily fees are "very important;" 25.0% see them as "moderately important;" and 8.3% say "of little importance." The interviews showed that this is quite a polemical issue. One group (a third) thought that stipends should not be paid under any circumstances - that those who are truly interested will attend without remuneration. Some high level leaders cited their own personal experience with the *Center for Superior Strategic Studies* (CAEE), where one neither receives nor pays but, due to the high quality of the course, the experience is considered extremely valuable; it was noted that there is even a waiting list. Those interviewed offered a series of options, for example: that the word "stipend" not be used, but rather that transportation and other expenses be covered for those who need help; that the Center require that the institutions cover all or at least part of the cost; that DEMOS should fix a total cost for the course and say to the institutions or potential students: "The Center is contributing, say \$1,500. What portion are you or the institution you represent willing to pay to cover your expenses?"

Another saving that was identified was stipends/honoraria to speakers and panelists. There was nearly full agreement among those interviewed - about six of whom had been speakers during the courses - that the Center should not, nor would it have to, pay them, saying that they would serve gratis if invited to give a presentation. In fact, one of the speakers had felt "insulted" when, unexpectedly, they wanted to give him a check after the session.

One of the major expenses for the course is site rental. Many of those interviewed said that the Center should reduce that cost which, as noted above, amounted to US\$62,700 for the second course, including coffee breaks and light refreshments. A few months ago, the Center's Administrative Department called for bids in order to attract new offerers, but the process bogged down due to the uncertainty surrounding the question of financing for the third course. However, there are signs that this cost could be significantly reduced.

In an attempt to help the Center, those who answered the survey also offered suggestions on other financing alternatives, including seeking help externally as well as internally (32%), mentioning the European Economic Community and the Salvadoran Government. Others suggested: create a scholarship fund; sponsor self-supporting activities, such as paid conferences; organize shorter courses for leaders and charge; have students pay part of their own expenses; sell materials given by the speakers, etc.

5. Students, academic quality, and follow-up: On formulating this objective, it was seen that these three factors are quite inter-related. That is, the Center's ability to continue attracting leaders to the course is intimately linked to the quality of the course, and also depends on the follow-up given to those who leave. Therefore, it was decided to look at these three factors as a whole.

With regard to the type of leaders that the Center attracts, there were differences of opinion as to those who should be given priority. The majority of those interviewed think that the Center should try to recruit persons from the highest level possible within their respective sectors - top leaders from political parties, business, unions, armed forces, etc., and some (about 20%) would require a degree as the minimum academic level. Nevertheless, the majority also recognized that there are many leaders without high-level academic credentials who "move masses," and that it is also important to recruit these people. Another opinion heard with considerable frequency was that the Center should make an effort to raise the level of the students so as to ensure greater impact afterwards. There was special concern to have the Center obtain greater participation by the ARENA party which is now in power, thus leveling its image as an entity with leftist tendencies.

In fact, the staff of the Center has already amended the process they plan to employ to select students for the third course. The modifications include greater contact with the institutions before and after students are named, and the more careful selection of the candidates based on a profile which takes into account: the impact of the institution represented on the national scene; the contribution that the institution can make to cover the stipends; the level of knowledge that the person possesses regarding the various aspects of national life; their leadership capacity; their experience in terms of national topics; and, their potential within the institution. (From the *Preliminary Scheme for the Process of Selecting Students* from Centro DEMOS.)

The academic quality of the speakers was evaluated by those who filled out the questionnaire, based on a scale from 5 as the highest to 1 as the lowest. In general terms, "very good" received 4.2. Speakers within the area of politics were the highest rated (4.5), followed by those from the military area (4.4), and the social area (4.3). Those from the geographic area were ranked as 3.8. On examining these data by sex, clear differences can be seen. For women, those who covered politics (4.7), social issues (4.6), and

military topics (4.6) were the best presenters. For men, it was those from the area of politics (4.3) and economics (4.2).

Likewise, the staff of the Center were very well evaluated as a function of their academic quality and the support provided: the staff was deemed "excellent" by 41.7%; "very good" by 43.5%; "good" by 14.8%. Between men and women there were some differences. For 55.6% of the women, the staff was "very good." On the other hand, for 50% of the men, they were "excellent." If one puts the "very good" and "excellent" rankings together, they add up to 85.2%.

The question of student follow-up brought a strongly unanimous opinion among those interviewed as well as those surveyed in the sense that the Center should and must do it if they really want to "permeate the political culture" of the country. On speaking with former students, they expressed near frustration due to the absence of follow-up. They had a myriad of ideas regarding how to do this. The EX-CEDES Association would also like greater contact with DEMOS, offering to help in any way possible. It would be to the advantage of the Center and of the entire undertaking to take advantage of this offer (which could also strengthen the Association), and to capitalize on the enormous store of support available. However, it will fall to the Center itself to organize the plan for doing so.

Another unanimous sentiment shared by the former students interviewed relates to the profound and emotional discussions which took place during the seminar-workshops. They reported that, after struggling with opposing views, and having arrived at a consensus, the groups were eager for their opinions to be heard, proving the victory achieved. Nevertheless, they were greatly frustrated when they realized that their views were going nowhere, remaining a dead letter with the four walls in which they were working. These comments are very important, not only to be able to follow up on the students, but also so that the course evolves in the future in keeping with the national context. This point was made in an "opinion article" by Rubén L. Zamora which came out in *La Prensa Gráfica* newspaper on September 13. Among his comments are the following concepts:

"...the transition which our society is experiencing and the magnitude of the problems require going further than the exchange of opinions and an active search for agreements among the principle actors in society in order to ensure advancement for the process of democratization and national development... the fundamental issue is that an explicit effort be made to reach agreement among the different actors, not through the simple exchange of opinions (dialogue)... but constructing a mechanism... that permits the achievement of agreement based on participation and an awareness of the diverse interests that constitute society... to achieve this, dialogue is necessary but not sufficient, it is essential to move toward harmonization."

Former students also felt that another component was needed at the end of the course - a "bridge component." This would be a session lasting half a day or a couple of hours, during which the creation of post-course *Action Plans* would be facilitated. These Plans would be drawn up by a single person or a group of any number of students, as they choose and at their own initiative, and would mark the path that they wish to follow after the course in order to take advantage of what they have learned. In addition, on knowing that their involvement with DEMOS and with their colleagues was going to continue through some

planned activity, the shock of ending this highly significant experience so suddenly and of "re-entry" into everyday life would be smoothed. Such Plans would also serve as a point of reference for the DEMOS staff for increasing and evaluating the long term impact of the program.

6. Internal Environment and Communication: On explaining the manner in which the Center organizes its work, many members of the staff commented on the atmosphere of insecurity that existed and the lack of internal communication.

According to what they reported, the changes of co-directors and the uncertainty surrounding the permanence of one of them (who at times announces that he is going and other times that he is staying), combined with the need to obtain financing for the continuation of activities, had created an atmosphere of instability within the Center. Another factor that complicated the picture was the lack of legal recognition for FUNDEMOS (which diminished the probability of obtaining funds) and the question which was up in the air about continuing the direct link with ICAS.

Internal communication follows the same pattern in which the Center is organized. The staff is divided into two departments, "the Academy" and "the Administration," both of which report to the office of the Director. The members of each department report that they are satisfied with the communication within their groups, but not so satisfied with communication between departments. Since the Center began its work, there have been only three meetings of the full staff - the last one convened by ICAS in August to explain the financial situation/crisis. The academic group meets twice a week to evaluate and plan their work. Each member has a work plan that is shared with the others; there appears to be a well-developed team spirit. Meanwhile, the administrative department also meets, but not with regularity; they also have personal work plans with goals and timelines. The directors of the two departments meet weekly, but other inter-departmental relationships occur on an informal basis. This causes considerable discontent, especially in the administrative department. As one person said, "We need to establish more structured channels of communication." Another affirmed that, "There are no meetings where all of the DEMOS staff is present, and we haven't had meetings like that since the beginning; this is a very serious problem."

The lack of communication between departments gives the sensation of a house divided. Due to the nature of the Center's main product - the courses - this sensation is aggravated by the perception that there are two classes of employees - superior (academics) and inferior (administration). In the words of one of the latter group, "We work too separated. They treat the administrative part as something less." Some even feel that the use of the term "Academy" when referring to the advisors is denigrating. One member of the academic group, commenting on his desire to overcome this defect and incorporate the DEMOS philosophy throughout the Center, stated that, "He who preaches must be converted."

The fact that the administrative staff did not share in the initial training process and the emotional commitment that experience left with the academic group, means that there are different perceptions of the other's work. For example, the administrative group commented that the academics do not know or understand internal regulations related to their own work, while the academics tended to think that the others did not understand their work. As one of the academics said, "My dream is that some day the administrative staff will learn and contribute to the program," alleging that "they don't understand the spirit

of a program on tolerance; it is not selling shoes." He recommended that there be joint meetings every week, "so that the two groups might understand their respective jobs and needs." Several others made the same type of recommendation.

CONCLUSIONS

Levels of Tolerance: It is obvious that the Center's courses have had a significant impact on the students' level of tolerance. But it is less clear that they have had the maximum effect desired on the institutions represented, and even less clear with regard to impact on the reconciliation process. It is probable that this is due to: a) the lack of data on the changes which have occurred; b) the low degree of dissemination of the results obtained; c) the lower level of organizational leadership exercised by some students, or the type of institution they represent; and, d) the lack of follow-up on the students.

Since the Center does not yet have an official policy or instrument for measuring changes in participants' level of tolerance, and therefore no baseline data exist in this regard, it is impossible to state with statistical precision the degree of impact that the courses have had on the students, their institutions, and the reconciliation process. Now, based on experience and progress to date, it would be important for the Center to formulate and put into operation a plan for measuring this phenomenon. It will be important to design such a plan with care, recognizing the difficulty of always getting complete responses given the atmosphere of distrust that may exist at the beginning of the course. It would be possible to take advantage of the survey carried out during this evaluation as a baseline and adapt the instrument for future courses. Said plan might include not only questionnaires at the beginning and end of the courses, but also monitoring of the institutions represented and of the larger context in the country.

With regard to this last point, it would be in the Center's interest to identify certain types of data or factors in the national environment as indicators of change, and to take advantage of the good offices of the EX-CEDES Association by having their members act as antenna or radar, constantly monitoring those factors and bringing the information collected to the Center at specific intervals. The Center, in turn, would continually incorporate these pieces into an "analytic portrait of tolerance" which would permit it, on one hand, to mark progress and, on the other, to keep its program constantly updated.

Unprogrammed Conflict Management Activities: To make its efforts in this field more efficient and productive, the Center would need to systematize and document what has been learned to date and to clarify its own strategic interests so that, with such an analysis, a clear and transparent policy, agreed upon by all parties, may be formulated.

It is in the Center's interest to maintain as the cornerstone of such a policy the link with the activities programmed, which are the courses. In this way, initiatives would come from the students, their institutions and those others which DEMOS identifies as important for its own strategic interests.

Staff Training: The training process which the academic group experienced on initiating their work had a very significant effect on them at the personal level and for the success of the work they undertook with

the students. Now, to complement and strengthen that experiential learning, it would be well for the academic advisors to acquire additional skills and knowledge related to their work. This would include, for example: skills in group dynamics and facilitation, especially for the seminar-workshops; strategic studies, analysis and planning; and, greater familiarity with the current literature and main schools of thought in the field of conflict management such as, for example, Alternative Dispute Resolution, Needs Based Negotiation, and Interest Based Negotiation. This will become increasingly crucial as the national context and reconciliation process evolve over time and change the needs of the students.

For all staff members it would be important to provide training in the field of project monitoring and evaluation, including the formulation of performance indicators and the creation of mechanisms for the continual collection of data and measurement of results.

In general, it would be well for the Center to develop, with the participation of the entire staff, a training plan based on the needs of the organization and of the persons it employs.

Program and Internal Monitoring System: While various suggestions were offered by former students and others concerning how the Center might improve its program, no disagreement with the activities carried out was perceived. The method used during the courses, that is the presentation of diverse points of view on the same topic, was highly appreciated and, obviously, had the desired effect of having participants enter into fruitful exchanges of opinion, thus learning to listen and respect one another's views in spite of their differences.

Regarding the selection of specific topics within the five factors of power, the participatory process employed by the Center to now has rendered good results. It would be important to pay attention to the new topics and small adjustments to the process suggested by the former students and the institutions involved, but the same participatory scheme should be followed.

Over and above direct observation by the academic staff during the courses and the adjustments that are incorporated as a result of such observations, no formal monitoring systems have been created. The ICAS-USAID Agreement did not include indicators of success, and no formal mechanisms were established for carrying out the required "constant internal evaluations" of the programmatic methodology and strategy. Neither was any baseline developed as a starting point in order to be able to measure results in a continual manner. Therefore, it is not possible to state precisely the degree of impact that the program may have had.

In view of these circumstances, and of the importance of being able to prove results when requesting financing, one of the tasks pending for the successful operation of the Center in the future would be the formulation of indicators of success and the creation of a comprehensive system of continual internal monitoring in order to measure the achievement of the objectives set and the cost-benefit effectiveness of the program.

Program Cost-Benefit: In view of the prestige already gained, though still within a reduced circle, and due to the need to move toward self-sufficiency, it is in the Center's interest to review its policy for financing the courses. Above all, the payment of stipends needs to be re-evaluated, studying the options presented

above and seriously considering a policy of non-remuneration for speakers, especially for panel discussions. Since the students assign very little value to supper-sessions, it might be well to eliminate that component of the program. Likewise, it is important to continue with the request for bids or whatever other means that may be appropriate to reduce the cost of site rental for the courses.

Students, Academic Quality and Follow-Up: It has been noted that the Center's ability to continue attracting leaders to the courses, maintain academic quality and provide follow-up for graduates are inter-dependent questions. They also depend on other factors such as, for example, access to the necessary resources, the policy on stipends, the schedule and duration of the courses, and the degree of need that leaders perceive for this type of training.

Leaving aside the question of financing, perhaps the key question is: What type of leader is it necessary to attract in order for the Center to achieve its objectives? At the time of this evaluation, there were various opinions within and outside of the Center. It would be important for interested parties to continue this discussion until they come up with a clear, shared response. As already noted, the experience gleaned from the first two courses has motivated a readjustment of the selection process based on a more precise candidate profile. This type of flexibility is a good sign in favor of the Center's ability to continue identifying and attracting the most appropriate leaders.

Judging by experience to date, the dedication of the staff, and the comments of the former students and speakers interviewed, the academic quality of the courses has been high. Except for the availability of resources to continue contracting staff and cover other costs, there is no reason to think that the Center will not be able to maintain the same academic quality in the future.

One facet of the DEMOS program that was still missing was a solid plan for following up on students during and after the course - for which they themselves expressed a great desire. On one hand, they want their success at achieving consensus to go beyond the seminar-workshops, and on the other hand they are very eager to stay in touch with the Center and with the colleagues with whom they shared a truly emotional experience. However, to achieve this, the Center would need to act as the transmission channel and organizer of *ex-post* activities, which would add value to its own work while satisfying the interests of former students. The ability to provide this type of follow-up will depend on the level of priority given by the Center and the assignment of this responsibility to appropriate personnel.

Insecurity and Internal Communication: The absence of regular full staff meeting at the Center means that the flow of information and the level of knowledge related to the issues which affect the organization are very uneven. This, in turn, contributes to the perception that some staff are better than others. This perception, correct or incorrect, is not in the Center's best interest, especially at this time of insecurity when solidarity is more important than ever. Underlying this, there are two levels of comprehension of DEMOS' work, since the administrative staff did not participate in the experiential training received by the academic group and, therefore, has not been able to share the depth of feelings or "mystique" that their colleagues have about their work.

To counteract the possible harmful effects of the insecurity that permeated the Center, it would be important for management to initiate a participatory mutual support process that involves and recognizes the needs of all staff members. That is, though the staff may not be able to solve current challenges, sharing information and feeling like part of the process could help find solutions and channel loose energy, thus calming the atmosphere.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. As soon as possible, Centro DEMOS should design and install a formal system for measuring changes in the students' level of tolerance during and after the courses, as well as an official plan for evaluating their impact on the institutions represented and the national reconciliation process. This plan should be based on specific indicators of success and a comprehensive mechanism for continual internal monitoring to measure the achievement of the objectives set and the cost-benefit effectiveness of the program. The design and execution of this plan should include the participation of the EX-CEDES Association and other interested parties.
2. Based on the processing and analysis of its work to date and its own strategic interests, Centro DEMOS should formulate a clear and transparent policy that identifies the conditions under which it will accept invitations to intervene in conflicts, always beginning with the students, their institutions and those others which have been identified as key to the reconciliation process in El Salvador.
3. Centro DEMOS should formulate, with the participation of all concerned, a plan for continuing staff training, including topics such as computer operation, budgets and other technical areas for the administrative staff; group dynamics and facilitation, strategic analysis and planning, and current advances in conflict management for the academic staff; and, project monitoring and evaluation for everyone.
4. To move toward self-sufficiency and reduce expenses, Centro DEMOS should consider reducing the cost of its courses in the following manner: a) elimination of "daily fees" or "stipends" in favor of reimbursement for "expenses incurred" for needy students to be paid or shared by the institutions they represent; b) suspending honoraria for speakers and eliminating supper-sessions; and, c) reducing the cost of site rental.
5. To capitalize on the investment of time and money and to ensure longer lasting results, Centro DEMOS should formulate and put in place as soon as possible a strategy for providing follow-on for former students, involving the EX-CEDES Association and others as appropriate in the design and organization of activities, always with the support of the Center.
6. Management of Centro DEMOS should establish as early as possible a process of frequent *"meetings in times of transition"* with all staff members in order to strengthen team spirit and share information and needs until the current crisis is overcome and the organization is stabilized. Once the crisis passes, such regular staff meetings should be incorporated into the normal work

schedule in order to continue exchanging information, seek ways to achieve a more coherent level of comprehension of the mission, and create a deeper team spirit among all staff, for which rotating responsibility for presiding over such meetings should be considered.

B. FUNDEMOS

In accordance with the plan laid out by the Design/Evaluation Team, to analyze the ability of FUNDEMOS to stay in operation, obtaining the financial resources necessary to sustain its own activities and those of Centro DEMOS, an examination was made of the Foundation's membership, its legal status, the initiatives already executed, the efforts made to obtain financial resources, the amount of resources obtained, and other factors.

As was explained in Chapter II, the creation of FUNDEMOS was contemplated in the first ICAS-USAID Agreement. It was envisioned as a Salvadoran entity "to serve as the permanent home of Centro DEMOS and sponsor of the training program."

The Foundation was publicly announced in November 1994, and in February 1995 the by-laws were adopted by the Executive Council. On May 3 of this year, FUNDEMOS requested official legal recognition, which at the time of this evaluation was still pending.

With the birth of FUNDEMOS, a transition period began during which ICAS provided technical assistance and increasingly transferred responsibility for the Center's supervision, administration and financing.

One requirement of the USAID Agreement specified that, as part of its technical assistance, "ICAS will also develop a fund-raising strategy that is designed to guide the foundation and the Centro DEMOS efforts to generate sufficient levels of resources to continue the development of program activities by the end of the Cooperative Agreement," that is, December 31, 1995.

FINDINGS

1. Representativeness Means Advantage: In accordance with the ICAS-USAID Agreement, the 44 founding members of FUNDEMOS and the Executive Council, which consists of 11 titular members and 11 substitutes, are "broadly representative of the myriad social and economic factors in Salvadoran society." Though the majority of those interviewed who are not involved in this program were not aware of the existence or composition of FUNDEMOS, on looking at the Foundation's brochure with the list of members and directors, everyone judged it to be truly representative. The next comment usually was, "Why haven't they let it be known? This is the kind of multi-ideological effort that is needed." Likewise, many noted the urgent need for a "National Project" (*Proyecto de Nación*) in order to dislodge partisanship or selfish interests. Even those who had some idea of FUNDEMOS (always as a "leftist" entity) admitted that they had an erroneous image, then expressing interest or expressing support. Some leaders, after realizing its representativeness, even said they would like to be part of FUNDEMOS in order to actively support the effort.

2. Goals and Plans for the Future: At the time of its inauguration, the Foundation adopted five "great principles," and five "goals and objectives," mentioning Centro DEMOS as one of the means to achieve what was proposed. At the same time, room was left for initiating other activities above and

beyond the Center's courses. Nevertheless, perhaps because it is too young, FUNDEMOS has not yet formulated a strategic plan for achieving the announced purposes. The circumstances that surrounded its birth appear to have worked against the Foundation's early strategic positioning. The ICAS-USAID Agreement that financed the work of Centro DEMOS already existed, and the staff as well as the procedures and rules of the game, were already in place. Therefore, according to reports by some members of the board, the first task was to get up to date and take control of the existing situation, which did not leave much time to think about other activities. As one person commented when referring to FUNDEMOS: "There are very valuable people, but they came in with a lot of insecurity; they have no vision or direction." A good number of others interviewed shared these sentiments. One thought that the role of FUNDEMOS included two fundamental tasks: 1) guard or guarantee the purity of the mission, without permitting partisan or sectoral interests to prevail within the system; and 2) take charge of fund-raising.

At the same time it was recognized that, before ending this period of transition in which the Foundation would have to assume ICAS' responsibilities, there is a great need for a clear and solid plan for the future. One of the directors noted that: "There is no work plan beyond the Center's courses; we must define what it is we want, where we are going. If FUNDEMOS doesn't change, it loses." Just as many of those interviewed thought that the country needs a "National Project," the Foundation needs a **FUNDEMOS Project**. Such a Project would cover the entire system that the Foundation now heads, and would include elements such as an outreach policy which, in turn, would support a well-targeted fund-raising campaign.

3. Outreach: Given the political climate that existed when the courses were initiated, and in view of the need to ensure participant confidentiality, DEMOS did not seek to disseminate information on its activities. However, on several occasions the Center has been mentioned in the press, for example in the English language newspaper in San Salvador and in the September 1995 issue of *National Geographic*.

FUNDEMOS has followed the same policy of not seeking coverage. Now, with the passage of time and the desire to permeate an increasing broad segment of the sectors which are key to national democracy, and thus increase the impact of the program, it is argued that the moment has come. Unanimously, those who are not directly involved, as well as all the FUNDEMOS members whom we interviewed, plus those from EX-CEDES and the DEMOS staff, were convinced that a well-designed plan was needed to put this in practice. With regard to the use of information, in an article titled "The Society of the New Millennium" by Víctor Flores, published in *Tendencias* magazine (September 1995), one reads:

"Information is a resource that can be consumed or used to add value to other existing resources... The question is, then, to exercise control on whom and for what reason. Information is then a powerful means of social control in a society whose dominant tendency is to convert everything to merchandise, principally information, the decisive factor in the balance of power."

One of the persons interviewed who has an important post within the press was unaware of the existence of FUNDEMOS and felt that DEMOS "has a diffuse image." He stated that the Center "has not managed to penetrate the conscience of Salvadorans, much less of the media, in spite of having so many important people involved." Likewise, he declared that "they have to have an aggressive and new dissemination

policy." He explained that "aggressive" meant that "institutions must go to the media, not the reverse. It is no longer enough to send press releases, inviting the media to cover the kick-off of some event (with a free cocktail), without offering them the opportunity to get into the content of the program." He stated that, with the evolution of journalism after the Peace Accords, "new forms of communication between institutions and the media" are needed, explaining that "an institution has to become the center of information on the topic."

On reviewing the FUNDEMOS brochure, this leader declared that it was a "truly representative group," and that it should "project itself," creating a communications department. He added that "it is important that it have a voice in major national happenings." He believed that "it is not enough to train; representative opinions must be contributed," adding that "there are no spokespeople in this country." These sentiments were also expressed in one form or another by the radio and television leaders interviewed. One said that "with the loss of credibility by the political parties, there is a general lack of leadership," noting that "the left as well as the right is divided," and that "we are in a period of readjustment when we need national objectives."

Another interviewee from the electronic media affirmed that "we are entering the 21st century without a map." On referring to FUNDEMOS and to the work of DEMOS, he declared that "there is no other forum like it here; it is a way to bury ghosts." This leader suggested that, after or during each course, FUNDEMOS or DEMOS should sponsor a public activity with one of the speakers. He also thought that "the experience of the course should be multiplied in the communities, using something like a notebook with simple but concrete ideas about how to reproduce the experience in their institutions." He noted that small groups of residents could present the notebook in their community institutions.

This interviewee then went on to share ideas on why and how FUNDEMOS or DEMOS should be involved, using the materials collected during the courses, in the preparation of textbooks for primary and secondary schools, noting the poorness of the curriculum as to civic education or values and tolerance, which young people need so much - and which the country needs for them to have. He ended by mentioning the current process launched by the Minister of Education to update the education policy and reorganize the school system, emphasizing that with the experience gleaned through the courses DEMOS should participate in that initiative, either to train teachers or to teach the children or both. When he was told about the agreement between DEMOS and the Technological University (which grants about half a masters degree in the schools of Political Science and Public Administration to those who have gone through the course), this interviewee considered that his argument had already been proven.

Media representatives also explained the market segmentation analyses they buy - to learn what type of person tunes into or reads what - as well as the surveys which they contract for or carry out on the habits and opinions of the public. They noted that this type of information should be incorporated into the design of a promotional strategy, whether it be of ideas or of products.

All media specialists expressed their support and good will, saying that they would gladly serve as voluntary advisors or to help guide the effort should FUNDEMOS decide to launch a dissemination strategy.

4. Fund-Raising: Experience has shown that there is a direct correlation between an organization's level of public outreach or visibility and its capacity to capture funds in support of its activities. Likewise, representatives of an institution (whether directors or employees) need to have a clear vision of where the organization is going in order to convince possible donors. That is, if one does know the product well, it is difficult to sell it.

It would seem that to now ICAS has been more concerned than anyone about the FUNDEMOS/DEMOS financial situation, actively exploring possible donations from private foundations and governmental as well as international entities. ICAS technical assistance has consisted mainly of direct contacts and not in the "development of a fund-raising strategy that is designed to guide the efforts of the Foundation" as contemplated in the Agreement with USAID. That is, no comprehensive fund-raising plan in which all parties have clear and complementary roles has been produced. Therefore, efforts tend to be isolated and individualized; to now they have not provided significant fruit. At the moment of this evaluation it was thought that the most feasible possibility was a contribution from the Canadian International Development Agency, where FUNDEMOS had responded to a request for proposals, a process which was still ongoing. However, the Foundation's lack of legal recognition represented a factor that would block this and other paths.

To date, FUNDEMOS had obtained a total of 109,306.32 Colones, donated by individuals within and outside of the Foundation and a couple of companies. Though the Foundation's Minutes speak of some meetings with possible donors, they do not document the results of those conversations. Currently, the Foundation has no specialized committee dedicated to fund-raising. However, during these interviews we met people who would like to help. For example, one of the donors who manages an association of Belgian enterprises in El Salvador stated that, with time, he would do the necessary to get help from Europe to ensure the continuation of the work initiated. He said, "had I known of the Center's financial crisis, I would have worked with the European community to raise funds." He also said that if FUNDEMOS should ask, he would gladly agree to collaborate as a voluntary advisor to its fund-raising committee.

In accordance with the policy enacted, in July of this year each of the 44 FUNDEMOS members was asked for 100 Colones as a minimum membership fee, plus 100 Colones per month in regular dues. But no formal collection mechanism was established. Centro DEMOS administers the Foundation's finances, but the administrative staff has not been authorized to remind the members that they should get up to date with their dues, nor do they have a Foundation budget against which to charge expenses. Nor has a discussion or meeting between the Center's administrative staff and the Foundation's Treasurer been arranged in order to regularize this situation. Though the opinion exists that there is much fund-raising capability and potential on the Executive Council, there is also the sense that this topic is "tabu" at the Center.

Perhaps because of the lack of appropriate mechanisms, to date only nine of the 22 members of the FUNDEMOS Executive Council have paid their membership fees, and about five have paid the monthly dues. Of the other 22 founding members, only two have contributed all they owe, while two had paid only the membership fee.

5. Communication Within and Outside of the System: Perhaps because of the "insecurity" suggested by some, to now only one of the FUNDEMOS Assemblies, which are held twice a year, has been open to Center personnel, except for the Executive Director who is a member of the Executive Council. On that occasion, the rest of the staff was invited as "observers," but not to give reports or talk about their work. Meanwhile, the weekly meetings of the Executive Council are closed, which creates a sense of isolation or of "them" and "us." As one interviewee commented, "There is not yet a climate of trust." Several persons commented that the lack of fluid communication with the staff meant that "the old patterns of behavior within the political culture that we are trying to change are again generated." Also, many pointed out that the fact that the academic staff had been the "professors" of those members of the Council who are graduates of the course had caused a certain tension when the latter became the bosses of the former. Some thought that it was for that reason that the Council had shut itself off so. Some members of the Council said they did not really agree with this policy. The majority of the staff expressed the hope that soon some mechanism for regular communication with the Council might be established, noting that in this period of "crisis" when it is not known whether the enterprise will continue or not, it is doubly important that everyone share and be aware that "we are all in the same boat." Several people suggested the desirability of having joint monthly meetings to be able to exchange any relevant news, concerns or ideas.

On the other hand, neither has a communication mechanism between FUNDEMOS and the EX-CEDES Association been established. This means that there is no feedback loop within the system. Therefore, it would be difficult for FUNDEMOS to capture the lessons learned, incorporating them into its considerations or plans for the future. In all the interviews held with former students, they expressed a great desire to help in any way possible to ensure the continuity of the efforts undertaken and to launch new initiatives.

With regard to the institutions represented in the courses, the political parties, the business sector, the government and others, perhaps due to its tender age, FUNDEMOS has not yet established a specific communication policy or mechanism. This contributes to the lack of presence in the community, and weakens the possibility of attracting new leaders to the courses, of monitoring their impact within the institutions, and of recruiting members and raising funds. As one high-level representative of the political party now in power advised when asked what to do to get more students from his party: "FUNDEMOS should go to talk with the party Council," adding that it would be the same with any other party.

6. Levels of Authority: Another point that many interviewees at the Center touched on was the level of authority of the two interested parties as far as decision making is concerned. While all recognized and accepted the preeminence of FUNDEMOS as the governing body, there was the impression that a good analysis of the division of responsibilities and tasks was still lacking, with the necessary authority being delegated to other levels within the system. Some thought that this was due to the tender age of the Foundation and the Council's efforts to find itself. For others, the lack of delegation of the authority needed to facilitate their work caused considerable frustration. It was also recognized that the Executive Director is the spokesperson for staff before the Council. But it was felt that often this places him in a very uncomfortable and paralyzing position when a problem is to be resolved or something initiated by another staff member needs approval. That is, while the Director tries to deal with pressures from both sides, at

times he is nearly immobilized, stuck in the middle. For example, there is a series of internal proposals, documents or other initiatives generated by staff that were awaiting the Executive Director's authorization in order to move forward. Apparently, the delay was due to the fact that the Director must first obtain approval from the Council before being able to act.

There was the impression in the Center and with other groups that the Foundation Council spends the majority of its time discussing questions of an administrative or nuts-and-bolts nature, instead of concentrating its energy on the higher level, planning how to put the entire system in operation. This impression has become stronger in recent months due to various internal scuffles related, for example, to the use of USAID funds and the staff evaluation that the Council ordered the Executive Director to carry out. Regarding this last point, the sense of insecurity and confusion that evaluation generated among staff was aggravated by the "secret" way (known by everyone) with which the matter was handled. Ironically, one of the documents drafted by the Administrative Department and awaiting approval in the Center was a proposal for personnel regulations that contain a formal policy of periodic evaluation in which the person evaluated also takes part.

All this has led to the sense that either the Council does not have sufficient trust in the staff of the Center or it does not know how to delegate the authority needed to comply with its responsibilities. In short, without an appropriate flow of authority throughout the system, decision making is slow, inefficient and vertical.

CONCLUSIONS:

Principal and Singular Advantage: On finalizing interviews with so many key individuals, one must conclude that FUNDEMOS' main advantage at present is its own composition. The leaders consulted, whether from inside or outside of the system, consider that because of the "true representativeness" of its members, the Foundation represents a hope - perhaps unique - for facilitating the formulation of a National Project, and thus ensuring progress for the reconciliation process. The problem is that, apparently, FUNDEMOS has not yet become aware of its own strength. On shutting itself off and not reaching out in a consistent way to the other actors on the national stage, it is failing to capitalize on its greatest resource - its very being.

Planning for the Future: From now to the end of the year is a critical period for FUNDEMOS to get itself in order and maximize the effectiveness of the system it heads. Therefore, it is urgent that the Foundation initiate and institutionalize a cyclical strategic (not simply long-term) planning process. This process would incorporate the contribution of all parties - FUNDEMOS, the DEMOS staff, and representatives of the EX-CEDES Association.

To initiate the process and formulate the first strategic plan, it would be important to hold a two- or three-day workshop in a retreat setting, designed and facilitated by someone specialized in the subject and with organization development experience. We underscore the importance of the facilitator being a professional expert from outside of the system, thus being able to work in an objective and impartial manner. The results

of this workshop would include: a) a strategic plan for three years (as a minimum); and, b) the adoption of an annual cyclical planning process which includes mechanisms for continuous monitoring to measure the evolution of the national context and the progress of the Foundation's activities.

It is clear that, at least for the foreseeable future, the students, speakers and panelists from DEMOS courses, who also constitute a representative group from various tendencies within society, should be the origin of the main input into FUNDEMOS' programming.

Dissemination Policy: As part of the strategic plan, and in order to permeate the political culture of a broader circle within Salvadoran society, it would be in the Foundation's interest to design and put in practice as quickly as possible a dissemination policy. To support and implement this policy, a department or section dedicated specifically to this task is needed. It is very important that any effort in this field have as its point of departure the students, speakers and panelists from the DEMOS courses. That is, instead of FUNDEMOS conducting its own research, which other organization do, it has the advantage of being able to base them on the statements and thoughts of those who participate in the courses, using them as a singularly persuasive tool. Likewise, on acting as a channel for the opinions of others, FUNDEMOS would avoid having to make its own pronouncements on politically sensitive subjects, thus making possible enemies unnecessarily.

There are very many ways in which a dissemination policy could be carried out. When DEMOS' program began, supposedly after the courses the more significant points from the various presentations were to be summarized, published in a balanced document, and disseminated to key persons in the sectors to be permeated. Nevertheless, for reasons which are not clear, this was never done. Given the magnificent raw material that FUNDEMOS/DEMOS possesses in the form of documents as well as videos (which could be edited), the dissemination of these elements would not require a heavy investment. In fact, there is already a document within the Center titled, *Ideas for a Centro DEMOS Publications Project*, a well thought out draft by one of the academic advisors. However, probably for the reasons explained above, these ideas have never been presented for FUNDEMOS consideration, remaining trapped in the system.

Fund-Raising: The lack of a strategic plan and a comprehensive strategy for capturing resources has worked against the clarification of roles and the more advantageous use of the many contacts that members of FUNDEMOS have. Though efforts by ICAS to find support for the continuation of DEMOS' work have been dedicated and energetic, the technical assistance necessary to resolve this problem has not been forthcoming. The services of a specialist in formulating fund-raising campaigns are needed to help with the design of a comprehensive process. That is, up to now efforts have been based mainly on personal or individual contacts, which are good but not sufficient. It would be better to formulate a plan which recognizes and puts to good use all of the human and other resources that are available. The fact that the Executive Council has no specialized fund-raising committee, and has not sought out appropriate people to advise or help with this task, also represents a great weakness.

Meanwhile, the lack of a process aimed at regularizing budgetary questions related to unrestricted or soft funds (e.g., those not contributed for any specific project), the collection of membership dues, the types of expenses allowed, etc., makes the economic aspects of the Foundation's work very confusing and

nebulous, especially for those who are assigned to keep the books. This, in turn, has resulted in mixed messages within the Center.

Communication: The absence of communication mechanisms and channels within the system has an "arteriosclerotic" effect, blocking the arteries that must nurture the various organs. This means that the different actors are isolated one from the other, which is an obstacle to the Foundation's leadership role and makes it difficult to formulate a clear and shared vision of where the entire body is going. To capitalize on all available human and fiscal resources, FUNDEMOS as the brain and point of origin would need to establish a fluid communication process with the DEMOS staff and with the members of the EX-CEDES Association. It would also be important for the Foundation to establish a policy for communicating with other relevant institutions at the national and international level so as to obtain the nutrition that the entire body needs in order to enjoy good health.

Delegation of Authority: For FUNDEMOS to invest its time and energy with a maximum of efficiency and effectiveness, the Executive Council needs to consider the redistribution of authority, reserving for itself the formulation and adoption of overall policy, and delegating to the management of the Center the most routine administrative and operational decisions.

Said delegation should carry with it an obligation for management to be accountable to and keep the Council informed, and to comply in a satisfactory manner with the policies adopted. It is also necessary for this delegation to include the flexibility needed for management to re-delegate part of the authority it is given to other employees, thus creating a flow of authority with responsibility at all levels.

FUNDEMOS Project: The graphic which follows, titled *FUNDEMOS into the Future*, is an illustration of how the system that FUNDEMOS heads could function. It is an attempt to show the opportunities suggested by the foregoing findings and conclusions, and serves as a guide for the recommendations which follow. The main components of the system and their respective roles would be:

- È Based on a strategic plan, **FUNDEMOS** sets policy, selecting the activities to be carried out and raising the necessary funds. At the same time, it initiates and maintains contacts with the various critical audiences - **donors, EX-CEDES and other key institutions**, and **the mass media** - to promote contributions, stimulate and monitor participation by institutions in the activities undertaken, and disseminate information.
- È **Centro DEMOS** administers the funds raised by FUNDEMOS, acts as the system's secretariat, and organizes activities within the **Research and Education** component - which not consist of the courses, but which could include other initiatives in the future. Through a feedback process, the Center continually incorporates the necessary adjustments into the activities of that component.
- È A **FUNDEMOS Information and Dissemination** office or department receives the materials that come out of the previous component (e.g., speeches, videos, and other information from the courses). They are processed, packaged and disseminated to the

three audiences already mentioned - donors, EX-CEDES and other key institutions to keep them informed, and to the mass media to create greater public awareness and support for all of the Foundation's activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. As quickly as possible, FUNDEMOS should hold a Strategic Planning Workshop with the participation of all other interested parties, designed and facilitated by a professional specialist in the field of organizational development, in order to outline a Strategic Plan for three years as a minimum and to formulate a continual and cyclical planning process to be institutionalized as a permanent internal and external monitoring mechanism to measure the degree of impact from, and to incorporate appropriate adjustments into, the activities carried out.
2. To reach a broader proportion of the critical sectors within Salvadoran society, thus more deeply permeating the political culture of the country, FUNDEMOS should establish a program or department of Information and Dissemination, whose work would be based on the materials that come out of the DEMOS courses, and which would design a comprehensive dissemination campaign, utilizing various means and with the technical assistance of a group of advisors who would lend their services gratis.
3. The FUNDEMOS Executive Council should create a specialized fund-raising committee which includes representatives from the Council, administrative and academic members of the DEMOS staff, and voluntary advisors from outside the system in order to: a) draft a comprehensive fund-raising plan; and, b) provide permanent guidance and monitoring of these efforts.
4. To ensure the efficient flow of information and feedback throughout the system, and thus support its efforts, the FUNDEMOS Executive Council should formulate a policy of internal and external communications and the processes necessary to open itself to the staff of the Center, to EXCEDES, and to the other institutions identified as critical for the achievement of its goals.
5. To increase the efficiency and effectiveness of its efforts, FUNDEMOS should clarify its own role and that of the DEMOS staff, delegating the authority necessary to those who have the responsibility of carrying out the Foundation's work, and adopting clear, open and participatory internal procedures, especially for periodic personnel evaluations.

C. USAID

This section covers the last three objectives identified by the Design/Evaluation Team, which are of special interest to the Office of Democratic Initiatives of USAID/El Salvador.

FINDINGS:

1. Next Steps and Future Needs: As several people commented in the course of this evaluation, what has happened in El Salvador since January of 1992 when the Peace Accords were signed is a "miracle." Suddenly, after 12 years of a bloody war that took some 75,000 lives, hostilities ended and a reconciliation process began. There is no reason to think that this process will not continue cementing the profound fissures left by the war. However, analysts - and, in fact, direct observation - affirm that this is a critical period in the transition. Some think that this critical moment will last a few years, at least until after the next presidential elections. Others point out that much depends on the economic factor, and also on the growth of understanding and tolerance among the persons and sectors formerly in opposition. "Fragile" appears to be the most appropriate adjective to describe the current status of the reconciliation. Chapter II speaks of the role of Centro DEMOS in this process.

Given the dearth of experience to date and the continuing discussion within USAID with regard to the desirability of financing projects of this type, the ICAS-USAID Agreement for the Centro DEMOS program suffered certain design flaws. Principal among the missing elements were effective and realistic indicators and an efficient mechanism for the continuous monitoring of progress and for measuring results.

Though no indicators or statistical baseline exist, the investigations carried out during this evaluation rendered evidence of the effectiveness of the work of Centro DEMOS, especially at the level of the students. Those who have gone through the two courses exhibit clear and profound signs of the impact that said experience has meant for them as far as the level of tolerance they now demonstrate and their comprehension of the reconciliation process in their country. At the same time, the work has served to train the staff of the Center, which is very probably the only group at the national level with such broad experience in the coordination of such diverse political sectors and ideological tendencies.

Less evidence was found with regard to the sustainability of the program which supposedly, with the end of the ICAS-USAID Agreement, will depend upon FUNDEMOS. The Foundation is still in the "heroic" stage of its organizational life, and would need an injection of much energy and good will, plus timely technical assistance, to consolidate itself as the institutional leader it could be. Perhaps the most important thing to note here is that, for everyone's sake, it will be increasingly important for FUNDEMOS and DEMOS to be aware that they form part of a single system, and that they share the same objectives and destiny.

Our appreciation and grounded recommendations concerning the changes considered desirable for the future of DEMOS and FUNDEMOS are found in the previous sections of this Chapter. Ideas have also been transmitted for the implementation of DEMOS activities in other parts of the country. The potential

for replication in other countries will depend on specific situations and the character of the conflicts. It was not possible during this evaluation to analyze that potential in detail, especially given that the situation of DEMOS was so fluid and unstable. Lessons learned are found in the next Chapter.

2. Participatory and Effective Character of the Process: In keeping with the penultimate objective identified by the Design/Evaluation Team, this section assesses the participatory and effective nature of the methodology designed by MSI to evaluate the impact of conflict management programs, based on the results obtained in this evaluation of DEMOS. For this purpose it is necessary to consider several factors, including: a) the separation of the process into two phases, with the execution of the second depending on the immediate approval of the first; b) the prime importance attached to the presentation of a written report by the contractor with findings, conclusions and recommendations as a final product; c) the existence of a contract that stipulated ahead of time the components, duration and products required, which did not permit the flexibility needed to develop a complete, truly participatory process.

In the application of the participatory methodology to evaluate the impact of the DEMOS program, though the content of *Phase II* (the evaluation itself) could not be planned until *Phase I* was completed (development of the SOW for the evaluation), the terms and duration of the process were fixed from the beginning in the USAID Delivery Order. For example, just as with traditional non-participatory evaluations, it was stipulated that a draft report be written and submitted by MSI before leaving the country. However, there was no time to continue the participatory process with the Evaluation Team, reaching consensus on the final report. Neither was there an opportunity to plan next steps for all concerned. That is, the draft became the main focus and final product of the process, instead of being taken advantage of as a point of departure for a planning component based on what had been learned.

The writing of the draft report took the MSI team over three days before leaving El Salvador, time that could have been invested in an examination by all concerned of an outline of findings and the participatory formulation of conclusions and recommendations which, in turn, would have become an action plan for the future.

Given these circumstances, it is not surprising that on finalizing *Phase I*, the methodology designed by MSI was judged *participatory* and *effective* by the entire Design Team, and that opinions were mixed after *Phase II*. This was shown through written surveys at the end of each phase. On the first occasion, all nine members of the Team who were still in the country responded. But on finalizing the second phase, only five members responded. In the latter case, when answering the question about whether or not the process had been *effective*, two said yes, two said no, and one said "it depends on whether the final product is accepted by all parties; too soon to tell." They were also asked about how they would change the methodology applied. Responses included:

- Ē Would put in more time for preparation and review of the final report;
- Ē Add one week more to produce the final draft report - with comments by us;
- Ē Perhaps schedule another visit by the consultant - maybe have him/her draft the document in the U.S., send it by DHL, and then come back to discuss it.

3. Usefulness of Participatory Evaluation Processes: By their very nature, conflict management programs have characteristics which challenge evaluation, particularly if they are traditional. Unlike other types of development projects, these initiatives have a high degree of sensitivity and political content, depend largely on the perceptions of those involved, and have non-quantifiable results which require the identification of appropriate indicators at various levels and a process of monitoring by those involved in the conflict in order to measure the degree of progress they perceive. Therefore, more than with any other type of project, to evaluate the impact of conflict management programs, it is necessary to involve the implicated parties. In this regard, the establishment of a continuous monitoring process in which all participate is perhaps more important than formal evaluations.

In the final survey of members of the Evaluation Team, they were asked if they would recommend that another USAID Mission use the participatory evaluation methodology that they experienced here. Two said yes, one said no, and two did not reply. However, on inquiring about the main factors that a USAID Mission should be careful about when employing this type of participatory process, all responded, suggesting:

- È Take into account that the process requires more time and therefore money;
- È Strictly demand at the start of the process PARTICIPATION with no exceptions; *
- È That AID people have time to work as team members;
- È That assurances be given that the parties understand participation perfectly and accept it;
- È That everyone be willing to accept constructive criticism;
- È Document broadly what is understood by participatory evaluation methodology;
- È The USAID Mission should be made up of people with broad experience in the areas which they seek to evaluate;
- È Depends - I think that it would work more easily and cost less if everyone on the evaluation team - including the consultants - lived permanently in the country, so that time not be so limited and expenses add up so fast. To do such a participatory process well requires a lot of time - it may be that this method is more expensive than many Missions can afford.

* One DEMOS Co-Executive Director decided beforehand not to participate in this process.

It is important to note that this evaluation was contracted and initiated before the first of October, when USAID's reengineering plan went into effect, and it ended after that date. Had it been done a little later, the Agency's new Directives, which recognize the critical importance of participation and include partners and customers in all project facets, would have been in effect, permitting a much more flexible process. In the "new USAID," according to Chapter 203 of the Directives, titled *Managing for Results: Monitoring and Evaluating Performance*, "evaluation methodologies and data collection methods... will permit maximum participation" (sec. 203.5.6a). Likewise, evaluation is not seen as the final point of a project, but as the link back into the first component of the process - planning. This document grants full authority to Strategic Objective Teams to decide "if/when an evaluation activity is needed, in consultation with the other partners and customers, as well as top managers in the operating unit." Moreover, it is the Strategic Objective Team that decides the type of document required and how results will be used; they can be used mainly as input for planning next steps. In fact, according to the new "Basic Monitoring and

Evaluation Policy" (sec. 203.5.1), the information that results from these activities "will play a critical role in planning and management decisions."

In summary, as some members of the Evaluation Team suggested, and as implied in USAID's new Directives, the cost of a participatory evaluation also represents an investment in the future of the project, that is, one must "evaluate the past to build the future."

CONCLUSIONS:

In El Salvador, the national reconciliation process is in a critical stage which will likely last several more years. One of the key factors for the success of this process will be an increase of tolerance among key persons and sectors, and their support of the democratic system that began in 1992 with the signing of the Peace Accords.

In view of this, to contribute to the country's sustainable development, it will be important for USAID/El Salvador to continue supporting initiatives such as the Centro DEMOS program which seek to increase the degree of tolerance and strengthen democratic leadership within the country. On doing so, it would be important to take into account a task that was not carried out during the design of the ICAS Agreement for the DEMOS program. This refers to the identification of clear and specific objectives which respond to the needs of all concerned, and which are backed by indicators related to context (e.g., the national environment) and at the level of the activities to be supported. In the case of DEMOS, the design did not specify which factors were to be measured, nor was a formal mechanism established for marking progress and measuring the "success" of the results. It would be important to do so in the future, and it would also be well for the other recommendations contained in the previous two sections to be implemented.

Participatory and Effective Character of the Methodology: Though the methodology applied by MSI was designed to be participatory and effective, the contractual requirements set at the outset by USAID, and the subsequent lack of flexibility, did not permit taking full advantage of the methodology designed. While it was possible to predict the steps to be followed in *Phase I*, which was judged *participatory* and *effective* by all those involved, it was impossible to predict with precision *Phase II* details and requirements, since they depended on the previous stage. Therefore, the opinion of the Evaluation Team was divided as to the results of the that latter part of the process.

It is now clear that it would have been much more productive if, instead of writing a complete draft report, MSI had been able to use those final days before departure from the country to prepare a brief outline of the principal findings and facilitate the continuation of the participatory process so that all concerned could consider them and come to consensus on the conclusions and recommendations. In this way, the final result would have been a report that contained the next steps agreed upon by all. Moreover, this would have obviated the need for USAID, once the MSI team left, to be responsible for seeing that the parties reached agreement on the comments to be transmitted for the preparation of this final report (a process that lasted nearly a month longer than planned.)

Usefulness of Participatory Processes: Backed by the new USAID Directives which support the Agency's reengineering process, one can affirm the importance of participatory processes in all stages of development projects - e.g., planning, execution, and monitoring/evaluation. Due to the nature of conflict management projects, participatory processes are even more important. Decisions on the need for formal evaluations should be taken in accordance with the type of information needed for project management and the level of investment merited for the acquisition of that information.

Of equal or greater importance, especially in conflict management projects, are the internal processes of continuous monitoring which involve the active participation of all parties. The DEMOS evaluation suggests that the internal monitoring and evaluation mechanisms of this type of project should be an integral part of the design and include at a minimum a monitoring team in which all concerned have agreed-upon, transparent and clear roles, and where they are called upon to participate actively in overseeing the activities undertaken. It was also clear that, as indicated in the new USAID Directives, for greater success, such teams should be coordinated by persons whose skills and characteristics permit them to function as facilitators and not as group "leaders."

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Given progress to date, and the still fragile status of national reconciliation, and to avoid dependence on a single donor, USAID/El Salvador should continue supporting selected activities within the Centro DEMOS program, particularly if FUNDEMOS and DEMOS should decide to implement the recommendations addressed to them as a result of this evaluation, beginning with a participatory strategic planning process which involves FUNDEMOS, DEMOS and EX-CEDES; the creation and operation of an appropriate monitoring and evaluation mechanism within the system; the supplementary training of DEMOS staff in conflict management, strategic planning, and group dynamics and facilitation, and project monitoring and evaluation; and, the design and establishment within the system of a program or department of information and dissemination to support all activities undertaken.
2. Since truly participatory evaluation is an evolutionary process, the details of which can not be planned in advance, and in order to successfully carry out the Agency's current Directives, USAID should ensure that contractual administrative processes permit the greatest degree possible of flexibility, and that they support the decisions of the Strategic Objective Teams and of the technical offices.
3. USAID/El Salvador should continue using in this and its other projects participatory evaluation methodologies, and it should share this experience and the results obtained with the Agency's Bureaus, Offices and Missions that are involved in the design, implementation or evaluation of activities related to conflict management.

CHAPTER IV

PREVIOUS EVALUATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

PREVIOUS EVALUATIONS

As noted in Chapter II, in September 1994, using a local contractor, USAID/El Salvador had a survey done of former DEMOS students. The fact that it was carried out in a sudden manner without prior consultation with either ICAS or the Center, and the formulation of some of the questions, caused negative reactions, adversely affecting relations between ICAS/DEMOS and the Mission. Though the report of that evaluation was transmitted to the Center, apparently the information it contained was never used.

That experience and the desire to ensure that the new evaluation would be accepted, resulted in a long delay before the representatives of ICAS, DEMOS and FUNDEMOS accepted the MSI team. This also appears to have motivated FUNDEMOS/DEMOS to contract its own local consultant to accompany it during the first phase of this process. As one of the involved parties commented: "That other experience was an example of how not to do an evaluation."

It is worth noting that, when the present work began, the mistrust and suspicion of the group could be felt. However, the participatory process itself quickly calmed those sentiments, since all realized that this represented a sincere effort to produce a product that would be useful to all, with USAID having nothing hidden under the table. Judging by later comments and our own observations, it is fair to say that a traditional evaluation where "experts" come to look in and judge would have deepened the chasm between USAID and Centro DEMOS.

LESSONS LEARNED

Based on what was learned through this evaluation, the following abbreviated lessons are offered for the consumption of all for whom they may be of interest.

1. The participation of all interested parties in an evaluation process enriches the product and also serves to lower the "static" within the system under study as well as a platform for building the future.
2. In conflict management projects, to measure progress and the results obtained, it is particularly important to include in the design the definition of "success," the identification of clear indicators, and the creation of the internal systems necessary for the continuous and participatory monitoring of the activities carried out.
3. To ensure greater efficiency from all available resources, human as well as financial, it is necessary for an organization to have a plan which is strategic, clear and transparent, which all interested

parties help to design and keep up to date, especially when an entire system with complementary components is involved.

4. Structuring an organization with two executive directors, separated departments, and different "team" labels leads to confusion as to who is in charge, and can interfere with the universal team spirit that should permeate the entire organization, particularly in the departments that feel in the "minor league."
5. Any nongovernmental organization (NGO) should create the systems necessary to take maximum advantage of all the voluntary labor, support and expert advice that may be offered.
6. In NGOs, a vision of self-sufficiency should be ever-present, with solid plans to move continually toward that goal. Along the way, it is in the interest of such organizations to avoid dependency on a single donor without laying a comprehensive financial base which may include contributions from a broad membership and donations from various other sources at the local, national and international level.
7. Creating a new entity as governing body in the middle of a project, and trying to transfer authority and responsibility from the original sponsoring organization to the new one, creates frustration on all sides and leaves the program's executing unit in a confused situation that may affect its output.
8. To increase the effectiveness of a participatory evaluation process, a final component should be added in which the same participants study what has been learned from the information collected, converting this knowledge into a plan of action which lays out next steps.
9. The type of document required from a participatory evaluation process should be decided by, and serve the purposes of, all interested parties, and not simply to satisfy the administrative procedures of the sponsoring entity.
10. A lack of flexibility imposed by administrative contractual procedures contradicts the very concept of participation and prejudices all parties involved in the process.